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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 KUWAIT 000089

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: **OTIP KU KDMR**

SUBJECT: KUWAIT MEDIA REACTION, DECEMBER 23-JANUARY 7:
HALLIBURTON; SADDAM TRIAL; IRAQ'S FOREIGN DEBT; KUWAIT
CURRICULUM REFORM; ARAB MENTALITY; CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

REF: 03 KUWAIT 02704

11. SUMMARY: In an article titled "Do Not Accept Colonialism," one writer claims that Iraq's oil resources will be controlled by "companies with strong ties to the American administration," specifically Halliburton who he writes is "accused of rigging the price of fuel sold to the US army."

News pages report that charges filed in June against the editor-in-chief of Kuwait's "Al Watan" newspaper, Mohammed al-Jassim, for defaming the ruling family have been dropped. (reftel)

One prominent liberal commentator states that Islamists oppose educational and economic reform only because the US supports it, ignoring the "impending economic and social problems" facing Kuwait. A conservative writer believes the US is behind Kuwaiti efforts to reform their educational curricula.

Mohammed Al-Jassim, editor-in-chief of local daily "Al-Watan" and Arabic Newsweek, wrote a long discourse in the December 23 edition of Arabic Newsweek on the "restoration of the Arab mind." Al-Jassim writes that the Arab mentality is "based on illusions and a fabricated reality" that glorifies "tyrants and criminals" like Saddam Hussein. Changing this mentality, he continues, requires "shock therapy" through replaying "the images of looking for lice in [Saddam's] head" in the same way images of the planes hitting the World Trade Center were repeatedly broadcast by Al-Jazeera. END SUMMARY.

12. News stories: Justice Minister Ahmad Baqer stated that Kuwait has prepared 178 "files" to be handed over to the Iraqi Governing Council for the trial of Saddam Hussein, according to Al-Qabas.

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports on January 4 that the Kuwaiti Minister of Information stated that, "When American troops leave Iraq, there will be no strategic reason for American troops to stay in Kuwait."

Al-Qabas reports that Foreign Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammed Al-Sabah said that GCC countries had agreed to take a "unified" position on Iraqi debt relief. He did not specify what the position would be. Al-Watan and Al-Rai Al-Aam report that Sheikh Dr. Al-Sabah stated that a proposed visit by Presidential envoy James Baker to Kuwait would be used to address the issue of Iraqi debt owed to Kuwait, but not compensations claimed by Kuwait as a result of the 1990-91 Iraqi invasion and occupation.

Iran has hailed Kuwaiti aid to victims of the earthquake at Bam on December 26, Al-Qabas reports.

Approximately 28 thousand Iraqi pilgrims are expected to transit through Kuwait on their way to Hajj in Saudi Arabia, Al-Qabas reports.

Al-Qabas reports on January 5 that the remains of 16 more Kuwaiti POWs have been identified through DNA testing and will be buried in Kuwait.

The head of Shiite clerics in Kuwait, Mohammed Al-Mohri stated on January 5 that "frivolous music" such as jazz is "haram," or forbidden, but that classical music "such as Beethoven's Sixth Symphony" is acceptable, Al-Rai Al-Aam reports.

Editorials

13. "Do Not Accept Colonialism"
Dr. Yaser Al-Saleh wrote in independent Al-Rai Al-Aam

(1/06): "It is well known that the American administration handed over, with no competition, reconstruction contracts in Iraq to two companies: Bechtel and Halliburton. A congressional investigative committee accused the latter of rigging the price of fuel it sold to the American army. The sources of Iraqi wealth will be under American control for many years to come, and companies with strong ties to the administration will be offered these resources."

14. "The Beginning of the Division of Iraq"

Ahmed Al-Diyeen wrote in independent Al-Rai Al-Aam (1/05): "The scenarios for dividing Iraq into smaller states is an issue which is raised by American NGOs that have influence over decision makers. When the Council on Foreign Relations suggests dividing Iraq into three states, the only thing we can say about this dangerous strategy is that it is a conspiracy. It is a plan to empower the Zionists in this region, and this was the real goal [of Operation Iraqi Freedom]."

15. "Saddam's Money"

Dr. Yacoub Al-Sharrah wrote in independent Al-Rai Al-Aam (1/04): "The reconstruction of Iraq can only be achieved if Iraq's money, estimated at thirty billion US dollars, and held by Saddam, is returned to the Iraqi people. There is no financial obstacle to reconstruction since many countries are willing to donate money. The real obstacle is in the cohesion of the Iraqis, or lack thereof."

16. "The Secret Colonizer"

Nabil Al-Fadil wrote in independent Al-Rai Al-Aam (1/05): "The secret colonizer is a patriotic Islamic colonizer. The practice of spreading Islamic awareness may have started innocuously enough through the establishment of small charity organizations, but it has grown into a dangerous giant octopus. Now, it controls the cooperative societies and the [Kuwait University] Students Union. [This colonizer] is even riding the horse of Democracy [in Parliament], something that they detest. Our dilemma is that if we raise arms against this secret colonizer in the name of national interest, it will provoke the sacred weapon of religion and Jihad."

17. "The Day the Ram Smashed its Horns"

Dr. Jasem Al-Fuhaid, professor at Kuwait University, wrote in independent Al-Rai Al-Aam (1/06): "It would be a setback for the Islamic world to implement educational reforms under Uncle Sam's orders. Our educational officials become very annoyed by this accusation, alleging they are reforming curricula without any outside pressure. Eventually we may witness the reshaping of young minds so that America can guarantee itself that it will always have nations subservient to it."

18. "Impending Crisis"

Dr. Shamlan Al-Issa wrote in independent Al-Seyassah (1/05): "The scathing attacks of political Islamist MPs against the Minister of Education on the issue of education development are unjust and arbitrary. [These attacks] demonstrate complete ignorance of the impending economic and social problems that will beset us if rapid reform on curricula and the economy is ignored. Political Islamist MPs concentrate on the political aspect of the problem, in that the United States is the one urging the Gulf and Arab states to develop their political and economic systems. America's insistence on reform stems from one important aspect: if democratization and modernization fails in our countries, then the alternative is the rise to power of political Islamist groups which means continued extremism and violence, and that will harm the West's interests."

19. "Restoration of the Arab Mind"

Mohammad Abdul-Qader Al-Jassim, editor-in-chief of independent Al-Watan and Arabic Newsweek, wrote in Arabic Newsweek (12/23/03): "When Baghdad fell to U.S. troops, [the Arab mind] considered Saddam's escape and disappearance to be a form of continued heroism. The American victory in Iraq reached completion with the capture of Saddam [on December 14]. The question is: will Arabs regain their sanity? Of course not. They will applaud every terrorist operation that takes place in Iraq and they will be jubilant for the death or injury of American soldiers anywhere in the world. The Arab mind lives in a world of illusions, lies, and deception. The Arab mind utilizes a fabricated reality due to its inability to deal with what is really going on."

Saddam is a criminal, a tyrant, and a dictator. He destroyed his country, killed his people, and harmed his neighbors. This is the reality. Arabs, nonetheless, see him as a hero. Saddam Hussein surrendered to the American forces in a humiliating and subjugated fashion yet they still see pride and greatness in him... Kuwaitis were the most enthusiastic among all Arabs in championing Saddam Hussein because of his war with Iran. They did not stop their enthusiasm until he invaded them.

Restoration of the Arab mind requires shock therapy. Last Sunday was a unique historic moment in modern Arab history as it represented the nadir of the degradation of the Arab mind. The United States must address Arabs in a language they understand. Al-Jazeera repeatedly broadcast images of the planes crashing into New York's World Trade Center, thus feeding the Arab mind with feelings of pride. The images of looking for lice in the head of the 'Protector of the Eastern Gate' must therefore be replayed time after time, in order to remain in Arab memory. Maybe then the Arab mind will regain its balance, stability, and sense of reality.

Oh Arabs, Saddam has failed you just as other leaders who preceded him have also failed you. They sacrificed your blood for their existence, even if this was done at the expense of your humiliation. You, on the other hand, are still clapping."

10. "The End of Israel"

Professor at Kuwait University, Dr. Hasan Abdullah Abbas wrote in independent Al-Rai Al-Aam (1/05): "To those of you who believe that Israel is acting in self-defense, you are deceived. Bastard Israel is a virus implanted by colonists into the Arab nation. We reiterate that we will not recognize Israel as a state. The goal is to drive Israel out of Palestine. There is no other solution."

11. "Resistance and the Umma's [Islamic nation's] Conscience"

Conservative Islamist Sami Naser Al-Khalifa wrote in independent Al-Rai Al-Aam (1/05): "It is beyond doubt that the Palestinian resistance is the only alternative to recover violated rights from the Zionist occupiers. Despite this, some voices are calling for surrender, citing the reality on the ground and the disproportionate balance of power between the Israelis and the Palestinians as pretexts to cave in. However, the issue should not be evaluated in material terms. Throughout history, Muslims have created an illustrious Islamic civilization through faith and not materialism. For Muslims, justice is in God's hands, not in the hands of America or Israel."

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